

Vishvesh

One of the many names of Shiva is Vishvesh.

Vish means poison or the world and Vesh means a covering or garb. Shiva drank poison for the welfare of the world and thus became Vishvesh and Neelakantha (Blue throated)

Shiva's garment is the world as poison; understood in non-duality this represents that the whole world is poison yet everything is sacred.

The prominent lesson for us then is to know subjectively that all is sacred poison, and also to know and apply practically that objectively the world as sacred poison has the very real ability to harm us and we should not abuse this sacred chalice of poison that lies before us.

It is widely known that Shiva drank poison when the world was in danger during the churning of the ocean (samudra manthan) but it is also true that Shiva smoked for ten-thousand years... but, then stopped.

Due to the revelation of the elements smoking is a form of poisoning the body more readily via Earth, whereas drinking is via Water. Smoke is the subtle translation of Earth into Air and Aether through the medium of Fire; it also contains trace Water since Water lies between Earth and Fire and must therefore be passed along in the process of transmutation.

As Earth is considered the most pregnant of the elements, because it features the full blown ideation of Shakti in her most material form, it's primary residue is smell. Yet Earth also contains all the other elements with their constituent features of Taste, Form, Touch and Sound.

Smoking then is a form of poisoning which inherently involves a movement from gross to subtle.

Being laden with all the Five elements, Earth, which is the primary content of smoke causes great change to occur in the body. The introduction of Earth into the lungs which are concerned more with Air than anything else is a novel form of consumption, which carries great danger if abused.

Inhalation of smoke should always be accompanied by a disproportionate amount of Air, otherwise the grosser elements cause great discomfort in the lungs.

Drinking is a similar process of combustion but which takes place in the stomach as opposed to the lungs. Perhaps it's true to say that the lungs are too delicate an instrument to cope well with matter in it's more gross states; compared to the stomach which is better equipped to deal with Earth and Water. The gastric fire internally assimilates and discards unnecessary material via a downward motion which follows gravity. The lungs however need to remove gross matter against the pull of gravity, which is obviously much more difficult than the subtle elements Aether and Air. In fact, of course Air and Aether are within and without the lungs always.

Still, let us not do injustice to the technology of the gut - which is also sensitive to the gross elements Earth and Water. Care should be taken to drink the purest water possible and consume food which is light and fresh and unencumbered by too much Earth.

It seems relevant to mention the tri-guna-mayi the three modes of

material nature. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva being translated as Goodness, Rajas as Passion and Tamas as Ignorance.

Earth as the most gross form of matter is the most ignorant, literally Shakti Maa ignoring Shiva in her tabernacle of the material world, by eating food which is full of Tamas one welcomes ignorance of Shiva, which is the cause of suffering... to return to the subject of poison, drinking alcohol is abusive to the system since it is made from the decomposition of matter. Obviously a pure alcohol is evinced from this process but the consumption of 'pure' alcohol is very rare. There is a great danger even in making an alcohol!

Alcoholic beverages have variation in the amount and purity of Earth in them; and the flow from subtle to gross (Aether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth) does not stop upon reaching a finite Earth element. For Earth again can be of good Airy quality, Fine Loam or Pure Mud... and it can also be putrid and not fully decomposed matter.

Water contains Fire!

The purity of water is marred by the absence of Fire. If there is next to no Fire in water it is not even clear and it's Earth content is higher. Conversely pure water contains a great amount Fire – since the feature of Fire is form or shape, water can be purified by adding shape to it. This is done on a seriously microscopic level as Water's fluidity is not dissimilar to Fire's own fluidity.

Since heat expands and cold contracts, Fire itself applied to Water by the overt process of boiling purifies it – but I postulate that a sudden decrease in the temperature of the water when the boiling process is completed does not sustain enough filigree of Form (Fire) to purify Water to it's greatest potential. Water that has percolated through the Earth (Pure Earth) for a far far greater time is much more formful and therefore more subtle than water filled with the inertia of Earth and lacking the DYNAMIC Form of Fire.

To understand further how Water contains Earth think of the subtle transition of Earth into Water as Smoke!